

1-1-2009

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Recommended Citation

Nerette, Sable (2009) "The Spectrum of My Identity," *Intertext*. Vol. 17 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/intertext/vol17/iss1/9>

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THE SPECTRUM OF MY IDENTITY

SABLE NERETTE

COURSE: WRT 422, Creative Non-fiction

INSTRUCTOR: Minnie Bruce Pratt

AUTHOR'S NOTE: We had to write small pieces and then towards the end of the semester we had to find a way to combine those pieces into one huge piece.

EDITORS' NOTE: Sable uses a little bit of humor and a lot of attitude to connect with her readers.

I WAS DRESSED LIKE A DEVIL,

a pretty devil. I loved that costume. I had on a red dress, devil horns, heels, and red lipstick. The part I liked the most about the costume was the fact that my mother allowed me to wear makeup. When I was younger, I would always play with my mother's makeup. After putting it on,

I looked so different, so not Sable, and I was pleased with that outcome. I could never wear makeup outside; the fact that my mother allowed me to wear it outside made me anxious for Halloween. I thought

I was the cutest trick-or-treater walking. I guess some part of me felt more feminine. No one questioned my gender or glanced at me with a funny look on his or her face when my deep voice bounced out of my mouth. Having the experience of acceptance was priceless.

You aren't truly accepted as something unless you abide by all the rules of a certain category. Like girls should wear pink and boys should wear blue, but what did it mean if I wanted to wear blue? I had to learn that at an early age. When I had on my little devil costume, my attitude somewhat changed; I wasn't used to wearing heels and makeup, so I felt sexy, attractive, and most of all, feminine. So the one chance I had to enhance my femininity, I took it.

As I became older, it was hard for me to be feminine because I didn't feel like a girl. I have a condition and it causes me to grow excess hair where it is not supposed to be. I was teased a lot in school for not looking like or sounding like the typical girl.

My voice is deep and I'm very hairy; there was nothing feminine about me. So I used to try harder to become girly. When I didn't feel feminine I would stay in the mirror for hours and contemplate what was wrong with my appearance and try to fix it. I started from my head and went to my feet. A big part of me just wished I could become someone else or better yet, feminine. I looked in the mirror on that Halloween day and I saw a girl who looked liked a girl. I saw a girl who felt like a girl. I saw a girl who was a girl, and it was all

because of the makeup and clothing I had on. I wanted to have this feeling without wearing a costume. I was convinced by the judgment of my peers that I would never become feminine. That costume allowed me to escape the reality that I endured five days a week at school. My personality was a contradiction of the character of my costume. That's when I liked myself the most, even if I wasn't myself. I wasn't this pretty little devil.

I wished Halloween were every night. I didn't want to go back to reality. I didn't want to go back to my peers' perceptions of Sable. Girl please! That ain't your hair, colorful nails wearing, and OH you so ghetto fabulous. I don't think you ready for this jelly Beyonce wanna-be. Having babies at 15. Uneducated black thang, miss independent ummm, I think not Ne-yo listening. You don't even know you father, Yeah, I said it. Project living, your shoes cost more than your rent. Spell college!!! Product of your environment. You damn video hoe. Big lips, big ass, small brain, small chance of ever being successful. Conscious, unconscious of self-inspiration blackness. You are inferior to tasteless living. You marginalized dog, less than human, 40 acres and a ham hawk. You illiterate jive turkey. Ebonics talking. You don't belong here, YOU DON'T BELONG HERE. This is Amerikkka; this is A.M.E.R.I.K.K.K.A, the land of the privileged, the land of the people who really deserve it.

I thought about the stereotypes that I was placed in. I questioned the truth of my existence, coming to the conclusion that I am not this, that, or any of those. But I'm a strong creative black woman who identifies with being fly. I'm like no other. My personality bounces off the walls of magazines, the stories of fantasies, the culture of blackness, my conversations with my peers, and the labels society has given me. For the most part, I'm happy with that. I have a flavorful, bold, and tasteful style with an intellectual soul, which thirsts for knowledge. I love the way I sound now, embracing my uniqueness and individuality. No longer ashamed of what God has given me. The nappy roots, brown skin, deep voice, and flat ass. What I be, how I be, why I be, and what I want to be is accepted. Thanks to family, friends, and most of all, God, I can now accept myself, difference and all. No longer will I be the un-tuned piano, busted out drums, the string missing from the guitar. I will not be the penny you threw away because you said it was less than money or the food you wouldn't eat. I want to be the blunt you smoke to get high, the shining star, and the word in the dictionary you couldn't spell or pronounce. Most of all, I just want to be me, truly me! See, I don't fit into a category.